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RABBIT MEAT IS COMPETITIVE 1/

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C & R-PREP.

Full self-fed domestic rabbits weighing from 4 or 5 pounds when 8 weeks old are ready for market. Such an animal, known as a fryer, has a carcass weighing from 2-1/4 to 2-3/4 pounds and when cut up into portions for home use can be attractively packaged in a cellophane-window carton. The housewife readily sees the quality and knows that her purchase has been protected through merchandising channels. The wild rabbit, on the other hand, frequently is handled with fur on and often is displayed uncovered on racks in front of the store. Therefore, competition with wild rabbits is not hard to meet.

Compact packaging of the domestic rabbit also lends itself well to quick freezing thereby permitting the rabbit to avoid competition with itself. Rabbit meat processed in the spring or summer when production is heavy may be frozen and stored for sale when production is low in the fall and winter; or it may be shipped from areas of abundance to markets where domestic rabbits are not so plentiful.

Competition with other meats that are priced lower largely because they must be trimmed and further prepared before they are ready to use can be met with proper publicity. Rabbit meat at a higher price may really be less expensive, pound for pound of edible meat, than meats at a seemingly much lower price.

Laboratory tests have shown that domestic rabbit meat is comparable to beef in food value. The primary advantages of domestic rabbit meat over other meats are its freedom from excess fat, its small bone, white color, and delicate flavor. With these properties, domestic rabbit meat should sell at a price higher than that of other meats. But it never should be priced too high. Usually a broader outlet at a somewhat lower price is more satisfactory.

1/ Material previously prepared by Charles E. Kellogg has been revised.

Soaking to produce white color is not necessary since this white characteristic appearance is natural. The rabbit carcass should be left in cold water only a few minutes to be chilled and thoroughly cleansed from blood and a few hairs that may still cling to it. Excess water in the carcass is nothing more than adulteration, which is unlawful. The best interest of the rabbit industry will be served if the local associations and individual rabbit breeders canvass their own operations and check on the few brokers, butchers, and cooperatives which may have permitted this practice. A rabbit raiser has an investment in property, in animals, and in his store of knowledge that will give the greatest returns when large numbers of satisfied customers increase their orders.

The rabbit raiser should make a substantial profit. That is the only way he can stay in business. The most successful businesses become successful by producing a better article than their competitors, advertising it, and selling it at a fair price. Much of the profit comes from economical production. The rabbit breeder can achieve economical production by acquiring or developing more productive animals, reducing labor costs through more efficient, sanitary, and durable equipment, and improving management practices. Cooperatives properly run also have been an effective means of bringing more profit to the rabbit raiser, but this entails true cooperation. Domestic rabbit meat as a competitive meat can and should stand on its own merits.